

THOUGHTS FOR  
TEACHERS OF THE BIBLE

BY

J. ARMITAGE ROBINSON, D.D.

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## PREFACE

THE flood of new light which has been thrown on the origin and history of the several books of Holy Scripture has made the Bible far more interesting and more instructive, both from the literary and from the religious point of view. But this fresh access of knowledge has created serious difficulties for the preacher in the pulpit and for the teacher in the class-room. The preacher has an unfair advantage over the teacher in that he can select his topic and is exempt from the danger of questions. The teacher, on the other hand, has to follow a prescribed course, and children's questions are often unexpectedly embarrassing. I cannot refrain from recording here an example of a really perplexing question, which will appeal to the heart of a good teacher. One of my missionary brothers many years ago bought out of slavery a little negro boy for a bag of salt, and tried to teach him the elements of Christianity. His English was of necessity somewhat rudimentary. 'Up' was the word he used for God, and 'buzz-buzz' was the mosquito, whom we have since

learned to fight as a most deadly foe. One day the little lad propounded the question : ' If Up made me, and Up made the buzz-buzz, then why the buzz-buzz eat me ? ' A philosopher would be puzzled if he were called on suddenly to give the answer, as the question was put, in words of one syllable. Incidentally the question may serve to remind us that not all the difficulties of religious teaching are to be set to the account of Biblical criticism.

I hope this little book may be of service to teachers, though it does not even touch upon the problem of how the Bible should be taught to children ; nor does it attempt to forestall the enquiries which a good and sympathetic teacher is certain to evoke. In these matters teachers must help teachers. What I have attempted to do is to set out plainly some broad principles, the recognition of which may help the faith and understanding of the teachers themselves. They will find out how to teach, when they see clearly what it is they want to teach.

The three addresses here printed were delivered to very different audiences. The first was given, at the invitation of my friend Mrs. Bryant, to the girls of the North London Collegiate School in June, 1908. My subject, ' The Bible as a Whole, ' was prescribed to me, and I found myself practically limited by time to a sketch of what

was meant by the Inspiration of the Old Testament. At that time it was the Old Testament that seemed to present most difficulty from the teacher's point of view. In the last few years much has been written with the purpose of presenting in plain language the gains which modern criticism has secured for the interpretation of these ancient Scriptures. I would specially commend 'The Faith of the Old Testament,' by Professor Nairne (Longmans, 2s. 6d. net), as a most attractive and stimulating introduction to the literature and to the religious significance of the Old Testament.

But to-day I am assured, and I can well believe it, that teachers are demanding more help in regard to the New Testament. Very serious issues are being raised, and they cannot be confined to academic circles. Teachers, whose position of responsibility makes them peculiarly sensitive to the vicissitudes of controversies touching the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture, are asking themselves with what confidence they can continue to teach even the simple stories of the Gospels. The same kindly intervention has drawn from me the second of these addresses. It was given before the Association for the Teachers' Study of the Bible, under the sympathetic chairmanship of Professor Adams, on 27 May, 1914. I have again done Mrs.

Bryant's bidding, but in my own somewhat indirect way ; and she has asked that this may be published together with the former address, to which, though on a very different scale, it is in fact supplementary. I have not dealt with the literary problems of the New Testament, though these have formed the chief subject of my own studies for many years ; for I have written of some of them elsewhere in a manner sufficiently plain, and there are many aids available in this department. Nor have I dealt with any current controversies : for these do not appear to me to be suggested by the literary criticism of the New Testament, though they doubtless affect the trend of criticism in certain minds.\* In this address I have endeavoured to set forth and illustrate some 'Central Teachings of the New Testament.' I am aware that it was too much to crowd into a single hour, and I should not have ventured on the attempt had I not been assured of an audience exceptionally receptive and (as I quickly found to be the case) entirely sympathetic to my treatment of the subject.

The somewhat enigmatic counsels with which

\* I should like to take this opportunity, however, of saying, in response to a direct question which has been put to me, that I still maintain the position which I took some years ago in a series of addresses given in Westminster Abbey and published under the title, 'Some Thoughts on the Incarnation' (Longmans, price 6d. net).

this address opened could not for lack of time be brought into clear connection with what followed. I repeated them at the close, feeling sure that their drift would begin to be seen. I have added now a paper, read at Southampton before the Church Congress of last year, which will show something more of what was in my mind. 'The Christ of History' was not a title that I should myself have chosen; and it may be well to recall by way of explanation that it formed part of a remarkable programme which went on to speak of 'The Christ of Experience.' But the occasion enabled me to say some things which appear to me to be of great importance in regard to the criticism and interpretation of the New Testament, and especially of the records of our Lord's life; and I have been urged by one whose kindly judgment must needs weigh with me to rescue this paper from the comparative oblivion of a Church Congress Report, and to put it forth afresh for the consideration of those who are rendered anxious by some recent questionings.

THE DEANERY, WELLS,  
*June, 1914.*



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# THOUGHTS FOR TEACHERS OF THE BIBLE

## I

### THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE

I HAVE been asked to say something on a very serious subject, to which, as I am told, the minds of many of you are turned. I was glad to hear it, for it is a subject on which I have spent the greater part of my life; but it is a very large subject to treat in a short space of time. I have been asked to speak to you about the Bible—‘the Bible as a whole,’ these are my words of command; and that is a very large subject, because the Bible is not a book so much as a shelf of books, or rather we might say two shelves of books in two languages, one shelf in Hebrew and another shelf in Greek. And these books are very different in point of time: the Greek shelf, indeed, was written, roughly speaking, within fifty years, but the Hebrew shelf ranges over a thousand years, or more, if we take the earliest and the latest written elements which it

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contains. And then, again, these books are very different in point of subject ; there is folk-lore, and history, and poetry, and philosophy, and prophecy ; and in the second shelf there is history again, and correspondence, and doctrinal treatises and an apocalypse ; and yet we sum it all up in one book and call it the Bible.

Have you ever noticed that we have made a singular word out of a plural ? Bible is derived from the Latin *biblia*, which again is a borrowed Greek word. *Biblia* is the plural, and means ' books ' ; it does not mean a ' book ' at all. Now in the Middle Ages, whether it was from carelessness or whether it was by a true instinct I cannot tell you,—but they loved the Bible then and they were not careless about it : in the Middle Ages they took *biblia* in Latin not as a plural (*biblia*, genitive *bibliorum*, as it used to be), but they made it a feminine noun, and they said *biblia*, *bibliæ*, *bibliam*. So they made a plural word into a singular ; and we have inherited that, and so with us the word Bible is what I suppose is called in the grammars a noun of multitude (is that it ?) or a noun of comprehension. It has come to be a singular word with a plural meaning ; and so the very history of the word speaks to us and tells us that when we talk of the Bible we are talking of a number of books and not one book,—the sacred books of our religion.

For the Bible is a bundle of books, which we must untie so that we may look at the books separately. And not only so, but in some cases one book of the Bible proves to be itself a bundle that wants untying : for it has been put together out of older books : and a great deal of what is called criticism, especially the ‘higher criticism,’ is this untying and separating with a view to better understanding. Perhaps a bundle is not a very appropriate metaphor, because bundles of things are generally bundles of dead things ; and if there is one truth about the Bible it is that it is a living thing, a growth, and a devêlopmnt. And therefore perhaps I might give you a metaphor from your own studies that will help you more and come nearer to the truth. Just as you tenderly take a flower to pieces in order to understand it better by a sight of its hidden parts, so a reverent criticism investigates each separate book in turn to discover the secret of its growth.

So far I have spoken of the diversity of the sacred books which we call the Bible—diverse in language, in time, and in subject. But if I am to speak of the Bible as a whole, it is quite plain that I must go on to say something of their unity, which makes it right for us to speak of them all in the singular, as we do in that wonderful word ‘Bible.’ What then is the bond which binds

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these books together? What is the law of growth which has made the flower? What is the secret of the unity of the Bible, so that we can think of and speak of the Bible as a whole? I should like to put it in this way: *The Bible is the record of the revelation of God to man through man.*

Now that thought of the revelation of God *through* man is one which I should very much wish to commend to you. It is an idea of very great importance, both in itself and also for the help which it gives us as a key to unlock many closed doors. It is important in itself because it implies a very high conception of human nature. It ennobles man by the suggestion that his being so far corresponds with the being of God that the revelation of God can be made through man; and even more by the suggestion that with man's growth the revelation of God may grow, and that the progressive development of man carries with it the promise of a progressive revelation of God. Moreover, the idea is not only important in itself, but it offers the solution of some very natural difficulties. I mention in particular three—Inspiration, Incarnation, and the Indwelling of God in the Church. Now, I am not going to speak of all these this afternoon; I am only going to say something about the first. You will admit at any rate that these are problems of

to-day on which we need all the light that we can get.

Inspiration probably suggests first and foremost to your minds the inspiration of a book. Now I must say that to me it primarily means the inspiration of a people. The people is before the book. The book is the surviving literature of an inspired people. The revelation of God is not made by a miraculous dictation of words and sentences: it is made through man, through human lives and human thoughts, guided and lifted by the special care of God, who brought one people peculiarly near to Himself in order that their knowledge of Him might enlighten the world. You may take your little sister's hand in your stronger hand, and squeeze her fingers against a pen and make her write what you choose. That is some people's notion of the inspiration of the Bible. They say God wrote it, through a man, indeed, or through men,—but God wrote it, and therefore you must accept every word of it as an absolute fact. Now there is not the slightest ground in the Bible itself for such a belief; and that notion is responsible for nearly all our difficulties about inspiration, especially the inspiration of the Old Testament.

Now apply to inspiration this idea that God is revealed to man through man. A certain people is chosen as the depositary of the revelation;

so that father may pass it on to son, and the national life may perpetuate and secure the sacred deposit and develop it with the growing capacity of the people. The people passes through fierce trials which threaten again and again to overwhelm its national existence ; but again and again God comes at the moment of perplexity and peril, and reveals Himself as the deliverer, or as ready to support until it is time to deliver. The bush, as Moses saw it in his comforting vision, the bush was burning, but it was not consumed.

Now the literature of every people begins with legends or tales, on which a high store is set, though nobody can tell where they have come from. They are a bond of their national life, they recite the deeds of their national heroes. And these tales formed the elementary education of the young before writing and reading were invented. They embodied the conceptions of the people as to the world of the past, and they set out their thoughts in a picturesque and symbolic form. The Hebrew people was a branch of the great Semitic family, and they inherited from that great family a stock of such legends or tales of the people. We can find close parallels to some of them, for example to the story of Babel and to the story of the Flood, in those wonderful bricks that have been brought from Babylonia to the



British Museum. When the providence of God laid hold of one branch of this great Semitic family—the Hebrew people—for special training, it did not neglect this one possible method of its education. It guided the people to recast its legends, so as to purify them from all idolatrous conceptions and degrading tendencies, and to fill them with the true thoughts about God and man ; and the result you find when at last the legends were collected and committed to a literary form. You may read them in the Book of Genesis. They are the stories which fathers used to tell their children about their national heroes and about the origin of the world. These stories, as we might expect, contain only that element of history which such stories contain in the case of other peoples. But they contain true conceptions about God and man, which God had been guiding the people to form. They are morally true and uplifting. They put ideas in picturesque forms suitable for simple minds. These are the stories which first taught you the fear of God, and which, one day, if you are wise, you will love to tell to your children. Now my point is this : God took man's best at that period and revealed Himself through it.

Well, now open the Bible at a much later point ; take the Book of Psalms. Here are the noblest aspirations after God which have ever

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been uttered. 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God': 'Seek ye my face: thy face, Lord, will I seek.' There we find God revealing Himself through aspirations which are first of all inspirations, and so guiding a human soul into fellowship with Himself. The soul oppressed with a great longing breaks forth into passionate poetry, and expresses for all time the truth that God has made us for Himself and our heart cannot rest until it finds its rest in Him.

Then we may go on to speak a word about the prophets, those great religious politicians, who guided or who denounced monarchs in the name of God, who lifted up a standard of righteousness, and who stood between the poor and their oppressors. If the books and fragments of the prophecies are inspired, that is because the prophets were the God-given leaders of a God-guided people. Once again you see it is through man that God and God's will become known. But the prophets had a further task besides the proclamation of righteousness and the directing of the nation's politics and morality. They had the sublime gift of reading the future by the tokens of the present, and of stimulating hope by the creation of an ideal. A long experience of the monarchy had taught the people of Israel a



great deal. It had seen its good kings, and how the God of righteousness had blessed them and their people ; it had seen its bad kings, and had witnessed the degradation and curse which had followed their revolt from the true God. And then it had lost its kings altogether, and had been swept away into captivity in Babylon. There its prophets came to the rescue of its failing hope. Out of the good elements and bad elements of the past, instruction had been gained and treasured, and there arose before the prophet's eye the vision of a King who should refuse the evil and choose the good, who should be a true representative of the unseen divine King who had chosen Israel as His own people, who should reign in righteousness on David's throne, and of whose kingdom there should be no end. But side by side with the vision of the King reigning in righteousness there arose another vision interpreting the sorrows of the present ; the vision of a suffering Servant of God, suffering for no sin of his own, but for his people's transgression, whose sufferings should have a mysterious power to save. And the two prophetic visions came true when they were marvellously fulfilled in one and the same person. The King came and the Man of Sorrows came ; and so the climax of God's revelation of Himself through man was made in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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It would be impossible for me to pass on into the New Testament now. I think I have said enough to show you what I feel to be the thread running through the whole of this great literature which we call the Bible and linking it into one : the inspiration of a people, the inspiration of those who led the people, and consequently the inspiration of the literature which the people left behind it ; the revelation of God to man through man—through human lives, through human thoughts, through human suffering, through human love,—God revealing Himself through all of these : and at last the climax of all, when He came to earth who could be spoken of both as the Son of Man—that is to say, the ideal of man, the man of men, the man for all men—and, at the same time, as the Son of God. So at last was that first marvellous suggestion of the earliest chapter of the Bible fulfilled, where it is said that God made man in His own image and after His own likeness : so that when the perfect Man came we found that we had in Him the perfect image and likeness of God : in His own words, ‘ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’ And so that second shelf of holy literature, of which we cannot speak this afternoon, begins by telling us who the Lord Jesus Christ was, as men looked upon Him as He walked on earth ; and then who He was, as thoughtful Christians interpreted the meaning of

the life which had been lived, after He had passed back into the unseen world. The revelation of God to man through man—the Bible is the record of that revelation.

## II

### CENTRAL TEACHINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I HAVE something preliminary to say before I get actually into my subject, but I will not waste any words in the preface. Generally speaking with regard to the New Testament we may lay down the rule that the Epistles are for the teachers and the Gospels for the children. What I really mean to say by that is this, in view of a good deal of modern thinking and controversy: Children are not staggered by the miraculous, provided they know that their teacher believes in it. The teacher, in proportion to his education and thoughtfulness and progressiveness of mind, is amazed by miracle, and could not retain confidence in it, if it were not for the light thrown on it by the full revelation of the unique Personality which renders miracle appropriate and credible. The Epistles show us the meaning of the whole, when at length it could be viewed as a whole and could be put to the test of a wide experience. That meaning has grown and grows; and the experience has widened and

deepened, until it has become a vast corporate experience summed up in the testimony of the Christian Church.

Now I have chosen three central principles of Christianity to speak to you about. I begin with what I might call the first principle of all, and begin to study it in the life of Christ. When I say I begin to study it in the life of Christ, I have learnt it from the Epistles largely, and I come back with it to study the life of Christ in the Gospels. I will state it in three short words—*One for All*.

If we ask, Why did Christ come down from heaven and become man on earth? we find the answer in our Creed, which is a summary of the Bible teaching. 'For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven and was made man.' There is the principle—He for us, One for all.

Now let us turn to the earliest account of our Lord's life, the Gospel according to St Mark. As soon as He had begun His ministry we find Him in the synagogue at Capernaum. As He was speaking, He was interrupted by the cry of a madman, or, as St Mark says, a man with an unclean spirit. You can imagine the horror of the congregation. Jesus quietly says, 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' There was a fearful struggle and a wild cry. It might have seemed

for a moment doubtful what the issue would be ; but it was soon over, and the unclean spirit came out of him. They were all amazed at His astonishing power. From the synagogue He went to Peter's house, and found Peter's wife's mother sick of a fever ; and He came and took her by the hand and the fever left her.

The news of these strange doings spread quickly. It was the Sabbath, and as soon as the sun set the Sabbath was over and the whole population gathered, bringing their sick folk whom they could not carry about on the Sabbath. All the city was gathered together at the door of Peter's house. The little street became a hospital, and He went round from bed to bed and healed them all. No wonder that the next morning Peter sought for Him with the words, ' All men seek for thee ' : They are all wanting you, as we should say. Yet Peter's ' all ' was too little for Him. ' Let us go away,' He said, ' to the adjoining villages that I may preach there also.'

That is our first sight of the Lord Jesus at work among the people—a wonderful power used for all. The next we see is that this wonderful power is combined with a no less wonderful sympathy. No one is outside the range of His helpfulness. There came a leper. You know how desperate the leper's case was. It was a marvellous faith that made the leper say, ' If thou wilt, thou canst

cure even me.' The only question in his mind was, Will He? What was the answer of Jesus? He touched him. Nobody else would do that. The leper was outside the pale. He was cut off from the congregation. To touch him was to put yourself outside the pale. As a matter of fact, Jesus Himself had to retire for awhile; He could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places.' He might have healed him with a word without touching him, as He did in the case of the ten lepers afterwards. But no: He wanted to come into touch with that man whom everybody avoided. He wished to make him feel His real care for him; and I am sure also that He wanted to make us feel that His love makes no exceptions, that no soul is too leprous to come to Him. As He Himself says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'

There it is then—the wonderful sympathy going out to *all*. It was not easy to be the One for all. There are indications in the Gospels that His works of power were not performed without cost. It may be that St Matthew's Gospel hints at this, when it quotes after those sunset cures the words of Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities himself, and carried our weaknesses.'

Passing from this, which belongs to the deeper region of His life, into which we cannot penetrate,



we see how full and crowded His days became. To be the One for all meant a busy life. Look at the third chapter of St Mark, where is the story of how He asked that a little boat might wait upon Him because of the multitude. I can give you a modern parallel to that one point. When I was in St Petersburg in 1897, Father John of Cronstadt was at the height of his influence, and when he came up the river to St Petersburg hundreds of people gathered outside any house where he was known to be, and pressed on him for his blessing, or sought to obtain his prayers for their particular troubles. It became so difficult for him to travel by the river steamers, that some of his wealthy friends provided him with a little steam-launch in order that he might get about quickly and avoid the pressure of the all crowding on the one. The Lord felt the difficulty, for He said to the disciples, as we see from another place in St Mark, 'Come ye apart into a desert place and rest awhile.' There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure—no leisure, no, not so much as to eat. Yet even so, St Mark goes on to tell us, they could not escape. The people saw them departing. Jesus, when He came out of the boat, saw much people. Did He express His disappointment? No, He was 'moved with compassion because they were as sheep not having a shepherd'; and He had



come to be their Shepherd—the One for all, whatever it might cost. What a sacrifice of comfort was involved in that comfortable word, ‘Come unto me *all*.’

And if you would see His own comment on His life you will find it in St Mark x 45, ‘The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister’; not to be waited on but to wait on others: that is the thought underlying the original words as you can see by comparing them with St Luke xxii 27; not to be served but to serve. He had just before said, ‘Whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all’; that is to say, He that would be nearest to Me, likest to Me, must remember that My principle is ‘One for all,’ and so he too must be servant of all. There is a saying ascribed by early writers to Jesus, not found in the Gospels, but which may possibly be genuine: ‘He that is near me is near the fire.’ At any rate, such a life cannot be lived without cost.

There then we have His own account of the principle of the highest life—each man living not for himself but for all. He was doing it day by day—One for all. It was a great object-lesson, but some of those who were beginning to learn it must have anxiously asked in their secret souls, Is there no limit to this self-giving, this giving away of oneself? Where are we to stop? I dare

not give any answer of my own to that question. I can only say, Come to Calvary and see what His answer is ; look on the Crucified, and then put the question again. Is there no limit to this giving away of oneself for others ? The Cross answers that there is no limit at all.

If this thought that we have been considering were the whole of the message of the life and death of Jesus Christ, if it were only an object-lesson of the highest human life, the life which gives itself to others with no limit at all ; then this principle of One for all, however much our conscience might approve it, could but crush us in the dust in despair. We see it must be right, it must be the highest ; but oh ! how much too high for us : how shamed our lives are when we bring them to a test like that ; how utterly selfish they appear. If this was God's intention for each of us, then we can only say, ' All have sinned and come short of the glory of God '—all except the One.

But the Gospel does not end with the Cross and the Grave. Its first word indeed is that One for all is the highest life for man ; nay, the very life of God revealed in the Man Christ Jesus, for the life of the Son is the life of the Father who sent Him. But it does not leave us with ' Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' It says that indeed, for it can

never set up any standard of life short of the highest : ‘ I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you ’ : ‘ This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you ; greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends ’ : ‘ We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.’ But if the message stopped at that, we should have no hope. It does not stop there ; it begins there. One for all—the One on the Cross for all whose sins helped to nail Him there—means more than this. At once it means that God who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will spare no pains to conform us all to the image of His Son : and when we see that the Gospel does not end with the Cross and Grave of Jesus, but includes the Resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit, we know that God is yet further pledged to help us ; ‘ for he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.’ So speaks St Paul, who is the great interpreter of the fuller meaning of the Gospel.

There are indeed hints of that deeper meaning in our Lord’s own words as in the passage from which we have already quoted : ‘ not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many ’ ; and again in the institution of the Eucharist, ‘ This is my Blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many.’ But those hints

are not plain until they are lighted up by what follows, namely by the resurrection and exaltation of Christ.

So we turn to St Paul, with whom the words 'one' and 'all' are very favourite words, and who tells us in one great passage quite plainly that 'One died for all.' One for all is the keynote of Romans v 12-21—a difficult passage into which I must not now go, but I ask you to consider it in this light for yourselves. If the 'One for all' brought ruin, by some mysterious law of the inter-connection of human beings, much more has 'One for all' brought redemption.

We must glance at that passage to which I have referred, 2 Corinthians v 14, in which we find the actual phrase 'One for all' (*εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων*). It is not quite plainly translated in our authorized version, and we may read it more clearly thus: 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.'

To sum up very briefly: 'One for all' is first our despair, and then it is our hope. The very principle that casts us down as we see it revealed in the life and death of Jesus Christ is itself, when examined again, the principle of our redemption

and forgiveness and life. 'One for all' is first a rebuke, and then it is a promise. It first gives us an example, and then it gives us power. We must learn it both ways : again and again, both ways : cast down but not in despair ; it will humble us, in order to exalt us. This then is our first principle, and I now go on to the second.

That first principle is not without its deep mystery. As we looked at it to begin with, it was easy : that is to say, 'one for all' is an example easy to comprehend, though it may be hard to follow. But 'one for all' as a ransom is most mysterious : mysterious, because it is vital ; that is to say, it has to do with life ; and all life, even physical life, is a profound and unexplained mystery. The words indeed are very simple, and yet they contain a profound mystery ; and I think it is important we should recognise this. They are so simple that the simplest minds can get hold of them and can rejoice in them. We see that often among the poor : their hearts seem to grasp the truth without intellectual difficulty : 'to the poor the Gospel is preached' : it comes as a divine message, it is accepted as such, and it does its wonderful work. Yet the thoughts which the words contain are very mysterious thoughts, and to some of us they present great

difficulties. In proportion to our education and to the development of our minds the difficulties seem to increase. How can one stand for all? we ask. We can readily see that 'one for all' is true as the law of the highest life, a life of unremitting service, a life of unlimited helpfulness and of unstinted love. But that is what condemns us and plunges us into despair. But when we go on to be told that 'one for all,' the life and death of loving sacrifice, whose sign is the Cross, is not only our Example but our Redemption; then we feel that we are passing from the clear to the obscure, from the obvious to the mysterious. Our hearts can spring forward to accept it; it just meets our need; and the actual blessing of redemption which it brings assures us that it is most certainly true. But our minds lag behind. We find it very difficult to explain. How can one stand for all, so as to die for all, and to rise again for all? That is a question which we are meant to ask. We need not call it a doubt. It is consistent with a perfect and sincere faith. We can say, I believe it with all my heart; I know by my experience something of its truth; but I wish that I could understand it with my mind. That is Anselm's *Credo ut intelligam*.

So then we come to our second principle, which lies near the root of this great mystery.



I give it to you again in three short words :  
*All in One.*

We come at once to St Paul. Again and again we find him using the phrase 'in Christ,' as for example, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' First notice that St Paul does not say 'in Jesus.' He does not contrast Adam and Jesus, but Adam and Christ. All through the Gospel Jesus is the name employed. In a few places we have 'the Lord'; but 'Christ' is rare and exceptional, never used simply as a name. When we turn to St Paul's Epistles we find the exact opposite. 'Jesus' is seldom found alone; and in almost every instance a special reason for its use can be seen. When a special name is given to our Lord, it is usually 'Christ' or 'the Christ'; but often we have the double name 'Jesus Christ,' or 'the Lord Jesus,' or the full title 'Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'Jesus' is the personal name by which He was known throughout His life, and which was written on the Cross: 'Jesus of Nazareth.' 'Christ' is properly a title; 'the Christ' means simply 'the Anointed': it is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word 'Messiah.' The Messiah was the anointed King whom the Jews expected to come from God at the end of the world, to rescue them from their oppressors, and to bring in a reign of righteousness and peace; and when

Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God as being at hand, all the people began to say, 'Is this the Christ?' But they got no answer. Towards the close the disciples were allowed to know the secret; and at the last it was because Jesus claimed to be the Christ that the high priest said He had spoken blasphemy, and delivered Him over to the Romans, who crucified Him as a pretended King of the Jews. When St Paul, who had fiercely resisted the belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, was at last converted, we read that he began to proclaim at Damascus that Jesus was the Christ, and it was by this title that he preferred ever afterwards to speak of Him. For to St Paul He was not merely or chiefly Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth, but the Christ who had been crucified and was now risen and ascended: 'We preach Christ crucified.'

The Christ then was the royal representative of the Jewish nation, the summing up in one of the chosen people. He stood for them all: their sure hope was that His triumph would be theirs. But the Christ as revealed to St Paul was more than that. St Paul had learnt that God's purpose was a wider one; as it had been said to Abraham, 'In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' He had learnt that the Christ stood for all men, not only for Jews but for the Gentiles also. All were summed up in



Him : ' all in one.' Now we can understand why he contrasts Adam not with Jesus but with Christ. St Paul knew that the word Adam was the Hebrew word for man. In Adam, the first man, all are included as his descendants ; and he even calls Christ ' the second Adam,' the second man, the new head of humanity ; and so he says, ' As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' All in one for death ; all in one for life from the dead.

It is because we believe that our Lord Jesus is more than the single individual man who lived the wonderful life of unselfishness and died the wonderful death of love ; because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of man (not the son of David only), the representative man, in whom all men are summed up, all in one—it is because of this, I say, that all that He has done is ours : His life, His death, His resurrection, His glory—all are ours, for we are all in Christ.

It was this great truth, that all are summed up in Christ, which inspired St Paul with his missionary zeal. He could not rest until he had told it everywhere. It was this which sent him wandering through the world with the wonderful message : ' I am a debtor, both to the Greeks and to the barbarians ; both to the wise and to the unwise.' ' Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.'

Now for a moment I ask you to turn to one of

the noblest passages in St Paul's writings, and I beg you to ponder it after what I have said. See how he expounds this great principle of 'all in one,' as being the very secret of God's purpose for the world—'the mystery of his will' he calls it—and how he expands it to include not only all persons but all things as gathered up in one in the Christ. You will know that I am referring to the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. He addresses himself to 'the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus,' that is to say, to those who have already found their place in Christ. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.' Then he speaks of the 'grace which he hath bestowed upon us in the Beloved' (an ancient Jewish name for the Messiah), 'in whom we have the redemption through his blood.' And then we reach the central thought of the secret of God's purpose for the universe: 'Having made known to us the mystery (or secret) of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him, to be worked out when the time was fully come; namely to gather up in one all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.'

How vast and lofty is St Paul's conception of the Christ : the whole universe is summed up in Him, all in one. We, according to our proportion and capacity, are included ; as he goes on at once to say : ' in him in whom we have obtained inheritance ' ; we have got our proper place according to God's intention ; we of the Jews ' who were the first to find our hope in the Christ ; in whom you also (you Gentiles), when you heard and when you believed in him, were sealed ' ( ' sealing ' was one of the earliest names for Christian baptism ) ' with the Holy Spirit of promise . '

Throughout the Epistle the same expression ' in Christ ' comes again and again ; but we must not follow it further. This is St Paul's hope for himself, his hope for the Jewish people, his hope for the Gentiles whom the Jews had counted as outside God's Covenant. It is his hope for all mankind. It is his hope for the whole of God's universe. All are gathered up in the Christ : all in one.

This is a truly grand conception of the purpose of God. It is the most splendid interpretation of the meaning of the universe that has ever been framed. But, you may say, is it not rather unpractical and remote from our ordinary life ? Now in reply to that I would remind you that we have just been reading one of St Paul's latest

Epistles, containing the ripest thoughts which had been given to him only after a long experience of what Christ actually was to himself and to others. It is good for us to know what a great background of thought there is to the simplest facts of the Christian life. But St Paul, while he was so great a thinker, was also the most practical of men, and his earlier letters show that he taught the great truth practically in a very much plainer way. 'In Christ,' he would say, 'is the very beginning of your Christian life. When you had heard my message that Jesus is the Christ, what did you do that you might claim your part in Him? You did what I did when I first came to know of it. The message brought to me was, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." Then I gave myself wholly to Him, being baptized in His name. So it was with each of you. You enrolled yourselves as His, you identified yourselves with Him, you put Him on.' So he says in Galatians iii 27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ'; that is to say, you clothed yourselves with Him, so that He was as a covering robe, and you were in Him. That is the plain homely language by which St Paul brought the great truth home to his converts.

Look at Romans vi 3, where the thought is fuller. 'In Christ' means sharing His death,

sharing His grave, sharing His resurrection. 'Know ye not (surely you Christians at Rome were taught it too) know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in a newness of life.' Just the same thought finds expression again in Colossians ii 12: 'Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye were raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead.'

It is because these spiritual truths are so mysterious that God in His loving condescension, knowing our frame and remembering that we are dust, brings them to us in the simplest ways—ways that sometimes to our minds seem almost too simple. We are not left with a lofty and vague mystery. The whole matter is brought to a sharp point which makes it practical and effective.

In order to bring this heavenly mystery, 'in Christ,' down from the region of ideas to the level of our life on earth—because we are not spirits only, but spirits acting through material bodies—God has mercifully given us the Sacrament of our initiation into Christ, in order that the vague and mysterious may have a point of contact with our

actual selves. 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ put on Christ'; you put Him on, you came to be in Him.

I wish you would take the opportunity of reading Martin Luther's comment on that passage in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, a book of which John Bunyan wrote, 'I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.' It is not a book much read to-day; but if you will read it, you will be interested in seeing how he brings out this truth in clearer language than I have done.

'One for all.' 'All in one.' Is there more to be said? Is not that the whole of the Gospel? One for all, the sacrifice of our redemption: All in one, the method of our justification and sanctification. Can there be more than that?

If we were merely isolated individuals, with separated lives and distinct destinies, then we might stop here and say, It is enough. Each one of us could say, Thank God I have learnt to believe in God the Father who hath made me, and in God the Son who hath redeemed me, and in God the Holy Ghost who sanetifieth me. But the mere quotation of these familiar words will have reminded you that there is something more



than the salvation of individual souls in the purpose of God. What is the meaning of those large words—‘ all the world,’ ‘ all mankind,’ ‘ all the elect people of God ’ ?

St Paul says in one place, speaking of his personal experience, ‘ Who loved me and gave himself for me ’ ; but he says also, ‘ Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it.’ Indeed St Paul says very little about individuals and their salvation. His constant thought and care are for the whole, which he calls ‘ the body of the Christ.’ And so we take one other great principle, and we turn again to St Paul and hear it from him.

We can find it immediately after the passage on baptism in Galatians iii 26–28 : ‘ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.’ There it is. You may have it in two words, or better in three : ‘ All one,’ ‘ All one man.’ In the Greek it is not necessary to have the three words ; for the word ‘ one ’ is in the masculine, by a notable boldness of expression. St Paul does not say πάντες ἐν ἑστέ, ‘ ye are all one thing,’ that is to say, a unity ; though that is perfectly true : but πάντες εἰς ἑστέ, ‘ ye are

all one living being ' ; and so in English ' all one man ' is clearer.

This reminds us at once of the great figure by which St Paul describes the relation between Christ and Christians, the relation also between Christians and Christians ; the figure of the body and its members. The Epistle in which this is most elaborately worked out is the Epistle to the Corinthians. And why that Epistle ? The Christians at Corinth were on the point of breaking up into several sections, taking the names of great leaders and even the name of Christ Himself as party badges. ' What I mean is this,' says St Paul, ' each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ. Is Christ divided ? '—he almost shouts the words at them—' Was Paul crucified for you ? or were you baptized in the name of Paul ? '

Note in passing how St Paul instinctively connects baptism with the death of Christ, as that which brings it home to the individual experience. These Corinthians had heard the message of Christ crucified—One for all ; had accepted it eagerly, had been baptized into Christ, had taken their position in Christ—all in One. Individual personal religion had never been seen at a greater height. They came behind in no gift, St Paul gladly admitted. They had experienced the new power of the life of Christ.



There could be no question of the reality of their religion. It manifested itself in astonishing gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and they set great store on these gifts, these strange powers, and on their deep insight into the mysteries of the spiritual world. But they took different views of how Christians ought to behave themselves in their new life. Some were strict on principle ; some were lax on principle, asserting liberty ' in Christ.' Their public assembly for worship had become a Babel of uncontrolled ecstatic utterances.

All had been well enough while the Apostle's overmastering personality had been present to restrain them ; but when that was withdrawn the full perils of his teaching appeared. It was one thing to bring into the Christian Church indiscriminately Jew and Gentile, barbarian and Scythian, slave and master, ' all in one.' It was another thing to harmonise these elements. Without unity Christianity could be but a passing sect, a school of thought ; not a universal brotherhood, not the Church of God.

How did St Paul set about to deal with that perilous situation ? We see this in the 12th chapter of the First Epistle. He explains the source and purpose of these powers : ' the manifestation of the Spirit '—that is the source—' is given to each man to profit others with '—that is the purpose. Individual personal religion is not

enough by itself. It is not enough for you to be 'in Christ,' enjoying the wonderful privileges of your position. You must get into your true order ; you must find your proper place in Christ's body ; you must keep your place. The Spirit that works in you is not yours. It is the Spirit of the Body ; 'for in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.' The Christ is not merely a heavenly being exalted to God's right hand, in whom you too are exalted in the heavenly places. The Christ is also on earth. He is 'many members but one body' ; an external, visible, tangible body of which you are an external, visible, tangible member : and only one member, not a complete whole in yourself ; only a part, though a necessary part, of the visible Christ. That was what you were made by the visible, external, tangible fact of your baptism. 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.'

In the figure, as thus used, Christ is thought of, not as the Head, but as the whole Body. Otherwise the Apostle could not go on to speak of the eye and ear as he does. Christ is the whole, you are the parts, he says. Not only are you as individuals 'in Christ,' all in one ; but also you are the limbs of His body : 'You are all one man

in Christ Jesus.' Sometimes when we speak of the body we include the head; sometimes we distinguish between head and body: and St Paul so varies his metaphor. We must not go further into that. I will only refer you to some verses later in the same Epistle where the process of the body's growth is described: 'till we all of us together come'—to that which none of us by himself could possibly be—'to a perfect man'; till we all come to a perfect man, the fully matured and completed Christ. That was St Paul's hope for the future: that the body would grow and grow, gathering in more and more members, ever larger and yet ever one, 'all one man'; until the one man was grown to full stature, the perfect man, 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ.'

That was St Paul's Vision of Unity. Far off then—it may seem to us, with our broken and divided Christianity, still further off to-day. But it is the will of God, 'the mystery of his will.' And to keep it ever before us, till He come in the realized completeness of His body, the Lord has mercifully given to us another Sacrament. If 'all in one' is brought near to each of us in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, so 'all one man' is brought near to each of us in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Listen to St Paul once more. 'The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it

not the fellowship of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the Body of the Christ? For we, the many, are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread.'

Now in illustration of that, instead of giving you words of my own, let me read to you two passages from St Augustine. The first is from the *City of God* (x 6). Commenting on Romans xii 4, he says: 'This is the sacrifice of Christians: the many, one body in Christ. This the Church celebrates in the Sacrament of the Altar with which the faithful are familiar, where the Church is made to see that in the thing which she offers she is offered herself.' The second passage is fuller and more explicit. It comes in a sermon to young people on Whitsunday before the Altar: 'If you would understand what is the meaning of the Body of Christ, hear the Apostle when he says to the faithful, "Ye are the body of Christ, and his members."' If therefore you are the body of Christ and His members, then the mystery placed on the Lord's Table is the mystery of yourselves. It is the mystery of yourselves that you receive. To that which you are you respond Amen, and by responding you subscribe thereto. For you hear the words, The Body of Christ; and you respond, Amen. Be the member of Christ's Body that your Amen may be true.' And

he ends with the striking words : ' Be what you see, and receive what you are.' It is surely interesting to us to see a great Father of the Church thus instructing young people for their Whitsuntide Communion.

We come back to the wonderful words of St Paul. We feel they bring home to us characteristic issues of the Incarnation and the Atonement—the Cup which is fellowship with the Blood, the Bread which is fellowship with the Body. See how bold he is. He does not say, ' The Cup represents to us our share in the Atonement,' in the timid kind of way in which perhaps we should speak. He says, ' It is what it represents. It makes us sharers in the Atonement. It makes His Blood ours.' He does not say, ' The Bread represents to us our union with the Body of Christ.' He says, ' It is what it represents. It makes His Body ours ; nay, more, it makes us to be His Body. We are one Body, because we partake of the one Bread.'

How deeply St Paul must have pondered on those words, ' This is my Body ; this is my Blood.' How much it must have meant to him that the Lord had said, ' This is my Body,' not ' This is my Flesh ' ; though that also is true, as we know from St John, who had learned to say, ' The Word was made flesh.' But to St Paul ' This is my Body ' had a further meaning. He

thought of it in connection with the truth that Christ's Body, the extension of the Incarnation, is a living whole, of which we ourselves are a part. The bread is the fellowship of the Body because we, the many, are one bread and one body, because we are all partakers of the one bread. The loaf broken into fragments given to each unites all who have received it ; because it is His Body, it makes us all His Body.

One for all : All in One : All one Man—a threefold cord that is not quickly broken. We can never dispense with any of these three principles. One can stand for all, because, mysteriously, all are in One ; and in so far as we are all one Man, we shall find that we can live, each part for the rest of the body, following the example of the highest life—One for all.

I have done ; but I am anxious to say again what I said at the beginning, because now perhaps you will see a little more what I meant. The Epistles are for the teachers and the Gospels for the children. The children are not staggered by the miraculous when they know that their teachers believe in it. The teacher in proportion to his education and thoughtfulness is amazed by miracle, and could not retain confidence in it if it were not for the light thrown on it by the full revelation of the unique Personality which renders miracle appropriate and credible. The Epistles



show us the meaning of the whole, when it could at last be viewed as a whole and be put to the test of a wide experience. That meaning has grown and grows; and the experience has widened and deepened, until it has become a vast corporate experience summed up in the testimony of the Christian Church.

### III

#### THE CHRIST OF HISTORY

WE must begin by considering what is the meaning of this phrase. The contrast between the use of the name Jesus and the use of the name Christ is a marked feature of St Paul's Epistles. Almost invariably when the name Jesus is used alone, or with the prefix Lord, the Apostle is referring to the earthly life of the Saviour; whereas the name Christ designates Him in His post-ascension glory. Of this the Apostle's great phrase 'in Christ' is a notable example. He does not—perhaps we may say he could not—speak of us as being 'in Jesus.' Even the passage which in our version is rendered 'them that sleep in Jesus' is not a literal translation of the Apostle's Greek. Together with this contrast we may also note how limited is St Paul's reference to the earthly career of the Lord. He has nothing, or almost nothing, to say of His teaching or His miracles. They are no doubt assumed as part of the historical background, but they are not dwelt upon. The facts on which St Paul rests everything are the death, burial,



resurrection and ascension of the Lord. It is these facts which have made Him for St Paul *the historical Christ*. With *the historical Jesus* before the passion he is not directly concerned.

It is otherwise with St John. For him Jesus is the Christ from the outset. The teaching and the miracles proclaim Him as the Christ, no less than the passion and resurrection. Spiritual the experience in either case has led to this difference of grasp and of expression. Herein St John stands midway between the other evangelists and St Paul—a true, if not a conscious, reconciler.

The synoptic evangelists are properly concerned only with the earthly career of the Lord. This is most conspicuously seen in St Mark, who sets the type for the rest : it is nearly as true of St Luke, who has his later volume in mind, in which he will tell of the Ascended Lord and of His action through His Church : it is somewhat less so with the writer whom we call St Matthew, who writes with a later experience of Church life.

When we speak therefore to-day of the Christ of History we must ask ourselves what we mean. The phrase ‘Back to Christ,’ which we used to hear, was generally intended to signify, Back to the Gospels, and specially to the synoptic Gospels. Then it was narrowed to mean, Back to the earliest substratum which literary criticism could discern in the synoptic Gospels : back even behind

St Mark, by a process of conjectural discrimination, which was often influenced by a desire to reduce the supernatural element of the narrative to the smallest compass, if not to eliminate it on principle altogether.

The history of this process, with its issue in the modern conception of the 'liberal reformer' in Galilee who met his fate in Jerusalem, has been brilliantly sketched and criticized by Albert Schweitzer, who declares that his countrymen have been fashioning a Christ out of their own social ideals, and who somewhat harshly reminds them that they have forgotten the apocalyptic or eschatological element which ruled the Master's outlook, formed the core of His teaching, and determined His career. So all is to begin again with a fresh understanding of the central motive.

This search for the human Jesus, fruitful as it has been in many points of detail, has come up perpetually against a barrier of baffling mystery. The life so treated will not yield to reasonable interpretation. But we on our part 'have not so learned the Christ,' or 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' We have all of us practically begun with the Creed, which declares Him to be 'the only-begotten Son of God' and 'our Lord': with the plain statements of His wonderful Birth, His Death and Burial, His wonderful Resurrection

and Ascension, and His future Return to Judgment. We have seen Him whole from the outset. In the light of all this we have read the Gospels—read them as the Church reads them and has always read them in her most solemn service, as complementary the one to the other, and with no attempt to distinguish between them. That has been our method of approach, and it has ruled our criticism. We have never felt under an obligation to discover a merely human Jesus. In the main, though not in every detail, it is true to say summarily that we have begun with the teaching of St Paul, with the pre-incarnate Christ and the great redemptive facts. We have come to the Gospels in the light of the Epistles. And so we have found in the Gospels the mystery which we had learned to expect, and our surprise has been that the Life should after all be so truly and simply human as it there appears.

Now if 'Back to Christ' means this, then *the Christ of History* is a phrase which conveys a much-needed lesson to-day. We shall not solve our problems in the Gospels if we neglect to study first of all that prevailing conception of the Lord Jesus Christ which was certainly full in the view of every one of their writers. If the New Testament were bound up in the order in which the books were written, and not in the order of their subject matter, you would realize every time you

opened it that all the Gospels are later in date than any of the indisputable Pauline Epistles. St Paul is the earliest of our writers ; and the first of the evangelists, St Mark, as well as the next in time, St Luke, was a companion and fellow-worker of St Paul.

It is a maxim of historical study that we must endeavour to know the writer if we are to appraise the writing : that we must, if we can, place him among his contemporaries, and see what his surroundings were, what atmosphere he breathed, and under the stress of what convictions he set about his work. St Mark, for example, was a Christian missionary who travelled with St Paul once, and was ready to travel with him again had St Paul been willing to take him. It may be that he did not fully share St Paul's wide outlook on the Gentile world, and like others of the Jerusalem believers he had doubts as to the acceptance of Gentile converts without their submission to Jewish ordinances ; but before he came to write his Gospel he had seen how God had indeed opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, and he had won his way back to the heart of St Paul. So he writes a Gospel for Gentiles as much as for Jews, and the Jesus whom he portrays is the Christ of the larger hope ; and it is only his simple adherence to the facts as he had gathered them that keeps him true in his historic perspective

and prevents him from colouring his whole portrait out of the resources of later experience. As it is, he has given us a Life which we to-day can recognize as truly human, while we know just as he knew that it was the Life of the Incarnate Son of God. He does not say, as St John does say, ' He was not yet glorified ' : but the distinction is there, it is implicit, though he does not put it into words. His care is to be true to what was seen and felt by those first disciples who knew not at the time the full wonder of the Master whom they followed.

When we realize the limits which the earliest evangelists set upon themselves, how little they intended to tell us of all that as members of the living Church they had come to know, how they concerned themselves only with Jesus of Nazareth as He was seen by His disciples in the earthly period of His ministry ; we are confirmed in our confidence in their narrative, we recognize more than ever its sobriety and truthfulness. If we believe as they believed, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Lord, then their narrative is intelligible to us : we do not wish to minimize the miraculous element which seems to fit in so naturally as to be its own corroboration. We must indeed wonder that a human life could be lived with such supernatural forces at its free disposal, and not be utterly demoralized by the conscious-

ness of limitless powers. They were not disturbed in writing by this thought, because they knew who He was : we can read what they wrote, wondering but not distrustful, just in so far as we share their knowledge of who He was.

But if we are to isolate the synoptic Gospels and try to read them as if they were a history in themselves, apart from the issue of that history which is found in the experience of the early Church ; if we reduce the central Figure to a religious genius springing out of later Judaism, round whom a mythology and a theology quickly grew, but who was in sober fact a prophetic reformer quickened by an apocalyptic hope, and a religious teacher proclaiming the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men—then we are making for ourselves a problem which we shall never solve.

For what, after all, was the Christianity that conquered the world ? Was it the religious and moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, enforced by the example of a great martyr's death ? Or was it the Christianity of St Paul—the redemptive power of Christ crucified and risen and ascended, the mission of the Holy Ghost, the expectation of judgment to come and the hope of eternal life ? There is no doubt about the answer. The more elaborate thoughts of St. Paul did not indeed find a response for



many generations ; but his central beliefs, which he shared with all the Christian teachers of the first age, the belief in the risen and glorified Son of God, the belief that He came down from heaven and was made man for us men and our salvation, and that He was crucified also for us, the belief that He was perpetually at work in the Church and would come again to judge the world—that was the Christianity of the whole of the early Church, and that was the Christianity—and not any refined philosophy of Providence or elevated system of morals—which conquered the world and actually set the Cross of Christ on the standards of Rome.

Lastly, those who persist in separating the Jesus of the Gospels from the Christ of St Paul are creating for themselves two insoluble problems at once. Not only does ‘ the Jesus of the Gospels ’ become so unintelligible that little by little every historic trait is eliminated, and men doubt at last if any historical Jesus ever existed at all—for, incredible as it sounds, that is a view which is said to be gaining ground : but also ‘ the Christ of St Paul ’ has to be somehow accounted for and explained. This last is the fascinating task of some highly trained and eager investigators in the German universities at this moment. They are on the road to discover in the Greek mysteries, and the philosophical exposition of

them in Hermetic writings and magical papyri, a whole world of pre-Christian thought which penetrated the later Judaism and produced the sacramental teaching of St Paul and his mystical conception of the Second Man from heaven. If any of you has studied Reitzenstein, and gone beneath the surface of his quotations and analysed the materials from which they are drawn, he will know how eager is the search and how entirely unconvincing the result. But for the moment Reitzenstein is a name to conjure with.

Such work must indeed be done, if only to exhaust the possibilities of explanation. Hope lies for the future of historical theology in the ultimate recognition of the impossibility of solving the one great problem without the other. The practical lesson to be learned from the present confusions is this: If we read the great historical documents of our Faith in the order in which they were written—first the Epistles of St Paul and next the synoptic Gospels, we receive an impression of unity. We wonder at both, for both involve mystery beyond our comprehension; but the marvel of the one is in harmony with the marvel of the other. In both alike history is all the while offering to us something more than history can by itself explain. But that *something more* is just the secret of the life of the Christian Church throughout the centuries. And that life



is itself a fact to be accounted for : its process belongs to history to trace and attest, if not to explain : and the first stage of the process is what we mean when we speak of the Christ of History.

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BS530 .R66  
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